MARVEL
BOOK ONE
AVENGERS: TWILIGHT
CHIP ZDARSKY
DANIEL ACUÑA

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BOOK ONE

THE BEST OF US

CHIP ZDARSKY &
DANIEL ACUÑA

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Avengers Created by Stan Lee & Jack Kirby

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YOUNG OR OLD, EVERY DAY STARTS THE EXACT SAME WAY:
YOU OPEN YOUR EYES.
EVEN IF YOU DON'T WANT TO.
AND MOST DAYS, BEFORE I HEAR HER VOICE...
COME ON, OLD MAN...
...I REALLY DON'T.
...NO LAZING ABOUT. PLENTY OF PIGEONS TO FEED OUT THERE.
COFFEE IN BED? WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE THIS?
JUST GRATEFUL MY LIVING LEGEND IS STILL LIVING...
...FOR NOW.
MY DOCTOR SAYS I'M FINE. JUST A MILD ARRHYTHMIA.
YEAH, WELL, I'M ALSO YOUR DOCTOR, AND I SAY TAKE IT EASY TODAY.
BESIDES GOING THROUGH ALL THE STORAGE STUFF IN THE LIVING ROOM SO WE STOP LIVING IN A MUSEUM.
YES, DOCTOR.
ROSA'S BEING EXTRA NICE TODAY. SHE THINKS I DON'T NOTICE.
SHE HOPES I FORGET.

IT'S AUGUST 13TH.
SENATOR
ROGERS
ONLY ANGELS HAVE
DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS
I DON'T GET TO FORGET.

POOM!

THE WORLD WON'T LET ME FORGET.
EXCUSE ME?

ARE YOU...ARE YOU CAPTAIN AMERICA? LIKE, THE ORIGINAL?
YES, MA'AM.
OH WOW. WOW. YOU MIND IF I--?
A SELFIE?

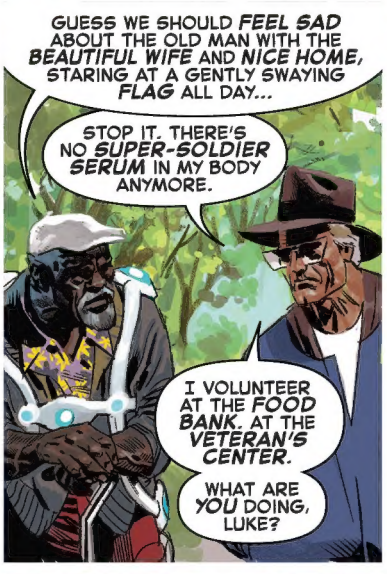
I... OF COURSE NOT. I WOULD NEVER--
RIGHT, RIGHT--

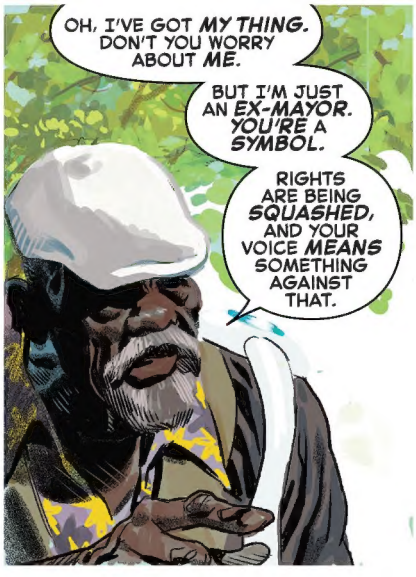
SORRY, MY MIND ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE--
IS THAT WHY...

...YOU'RE LATE MEETING ME?
C'MON, MAN... MATT'S WAITING IN THE PARK.
SORRY, LUKE. SLOW START...
WALK
YOU KICKING COFFEE NOW? YOU USUALLY--
ROSA MADE ME ONE ALREADY. HAND-DELIVERED TO THE BED.
AH. 'CAUSE IT'S...
H-DAY.
H-DAY.
SNFF SNFF
YOU WERE WEARING OLD-MAN COLOGNE EVEN WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG.
MATT. HOW'S IT GOING?
HORRIBLE, STEVE.
OVERRUN WITH CASES.
THAT DAMNED WATCHER ACT IS TURNING EVERY KID WITH AN OLD CAMERA PHONE INTO A "CRIMINAL."
NOT TO MENTION THESE #$%& "TERROR CURFEWS," LIKE HYDRA IS EVEN A THREAT ANYMORE.
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN.

I'M GLAD YOU DECIDED TO REOPEN YOUR LEGAL CLINIC.
YEAH, WELL, SOMEBODY'S GOT TO DO SOMETHING...
MATT, I TOLD YOU...

...I TRIED. A RUN FOR OFFICE AND A SOUND REBUKE FROM THE VOTERS SHOWED ME THAT I'M JUST...
...JUST AN OLD SOLDIER, WISHING FOR DAYS GONE BY.


GUESS WE SHOULD FEEL SAD ABOUT THE OLD MAN WITH THE BEAUTIFUL WIFE AND NICE HOME, STARING AT A GENTLY SWAYING FLAG ALL DAY...
STOP IT. THERE'S NO SUPER-SOLDIER SERUM IN MY BODY ANYMORE.
I VOLUNTEER AT THE FOOD BANK. AT THE VETERAN'S CENTER.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, LUKE?

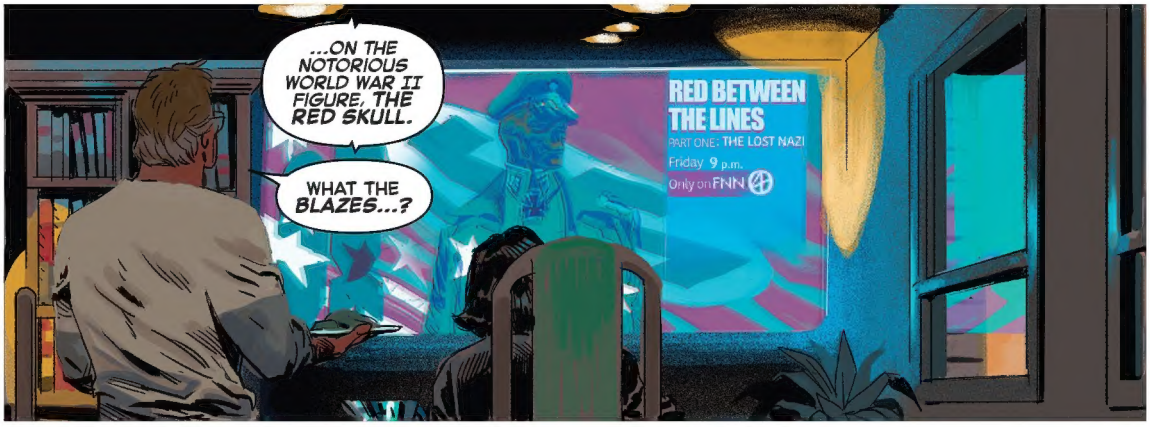

OH, I'VE GOT MY THING. DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT ME.
BUT I'M JUST AN EX-MAYOR. YOU'RE A SYMBOL.
RIGHTS ARE BEING SQUASHED, AND YOUR VOICE MEANS SOMETHING AGAINST THAT.

BUT THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE DON'T WANT HELP. THEY VOTED FOR THIS OVER AND OVER.
NOBODY WANTS TO LISTEN TO ME...
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF THEY WANT TO...

...THEY NEED TO.
I'M TIRED OF THESE BASTARDS, STEVE.

I'M TIRED OF THEIR EYES.

FWSSS


...ON THE NOTORIOUS WORLD WAR II FIGURE, THE RED SKULL.
WHAT THE BLAZES...?
RED BETWEEN THE LINES
PART ONE: THE LOST NAZI
Friday 9 p.m.
Only on FNN

HISTORY PAINTED JOHANN SHMIDT AS HITLER'S RIGHT-HAND MAN...
...BUT RECENT EVIDENCE SHOWS SHMIDT WORKED AGAINST HITLER, TRYING TO TAKE THE FÜHRER DOWN FROM WITHIN THE THIRD REICH.
RED BETWEEN THE LINES
PART ONE: THE LOST NAZI
Friday 9 p.m.
Only on FNN

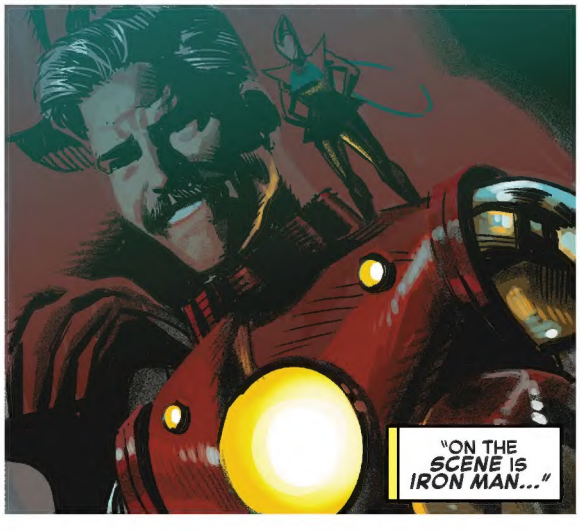
SACRIFICING HIS OWN FACE, HIS FAMILY AND HIS REPUTATION FOR DECADES AFTER.
THIS IS... HOW--?

JOIN US THIS WEEK AS WE EXPLORE THE HISTORY OF THE MAN KNOWN AS "THE RED SKULL"...
...AND THE MEN WHO CAME AFTER, FURTHER TWISTING HIS STORY.

EPISODE ONE: THE LOST NAZI, DEBUTS 9:00 P.M. TOMORROW NIGHT, ONLY ON FNN--
SHMIDT ONLY TRIED TO TAKE DOWN HITLER SO HE COULD LEAD THE NAZIS!
HOW CAN THEY--?
STEVE, THEY'RE JUST TRYING TO WHIP UP SOME FAKE CONTROVERSY. DON'T FALL FOR--
THUD!

I'M JUST--
NOBODY CARES ABOUT THE TRUTH ANYMORE...
NOBODY...
NEWS

NOBODY CARES...


"ON THE SCENE IS IRON MAN..."

...AND THE REST OF THE AVENGERS!
IRON MAN, HOW DID YOU DISCOVER THE HYDRA BOMBING PLOT?
WELL, ANDREW, I WISH I COULD SAY IT WAS THOR'S DETECTIVE WORK ...
...BUT WE WERE CALLED IN BY THE F.B.I. WHO PICKED UP SOME CHATTER.
IRON MAN IS BEING MODEST HERE. HE MANAGED TO FIND AND DEFUSE A NUCLEAR-LEVEL THREAT IN NO TIME.
WE'RE CONSTANTLY AMAZED AT THE ADVANCEMENTS TO HIS ARMOR--
...THANKS TO STARK TECHNOLOGY.
YOU'RE WELCOME.
YOU KNOW...
...YOU COULD BE THANKED FOR A LOT MORE IF YOU JUST AGREED TO BE IRON MAN.
UGH, PLEASE, JARVIS...
...NOT THIS AGAIN.
JUST GIVE MY POOR HEAD SOME COFFEE...
I'M NOT YOUR BUTLER, JAMES. THAT WAS MY BROTHER.

OH, COME ON, KYLE. EDDIE WAS MORE THAN A BUTLER AND YOU KNOW IT.
BE THAT AS IT MAY...
...I DON'T THINK HE WOULD'VE ENJOYED CLEANING UP AFTER YOU EITHER. I RAISED YOU BETTER THAN THIS, JAMES.
I JUST HEARD FROM THE PRESIDENT.
HE NEEDS YOU TO COME UP WITH A BETTER SERIES OF SOLDIER ARMOR NOW THAT LATVERIA HAS INCREASED HOSTILITIES ON THE HUNGARIAN BORDER.
I JUST DID THAT! I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO ADD TO THEM!
WELL, THEN... I SUPPOSE YOU SHOULD HEAD OVER TO THE RAFT AND COME UP WITH SOMETHING.
GREAT. ANYTHING ELSE, MR. C.E.O.?
WELL, NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
...THE F.B.I. ALSO LET US KNOW WE MAY HAVE TO HELP TALK DOWN...
...AN OLD FRIEND.

OKAY, MR. ROGERS, WE'RE GOING *LIVE* IN *TWO.*
I APPRECIATE YOU HAVING ME ON.
OH, WE'RE *ECSTATIC* YOU'RE HERE! THE CREW HAS BEEN BUZZING ALL DAY!
APOLOGIES FOR MY *TARDINESS...*
...BUT LOOKING THIS *GOOD* TAKES *TIME.*
HEY, *UNCLE STEVE.* YOU GOOD?
JIMMY...
WOW... I HAVEN'T BEEN CALLED *THAT* IN A LONG TIME.
YOU REALLY *DO* LIVE IN THE *PAST,* DON'T YOU?
OKAY, PEOPLE! THROWING TO YOU IN THREE... TWO...

THE RED SKULL! A NAME SYNONYMOUS WITH NAZIS AND "SUPER-VILLAINY"!
BUT A RECENT DOCUSERIES PUTS FORTH THE IDEA THAT THIS WAS, IN FACT, A COVER FOR THE MAN WHO TRIED TO TAKE HITLER DOWN FROM THE INSIDE!
TODAY, I'M JOINED BY A TRUE LIVING LEGEND...
...THE ORIGINAL CAPTAIN AMERICA, STEVE ROGERS.
THANKS FOR HAVING ME, TAMMY.
AND THE C.E.O. OF STARK TECHNOLOGY, THE SON OF THE ORIGINAL IRON MAN AND WASP, JAMES STARK!
NEVER TOO BUSY FOR YOU, TAMMY.
WHAT I AM TOO BUSY FOR, HOWEVER...
...IS OLD MEN TRYING TO SHUT DOWN FREE SPEECH.
"MR. ROGERS" HERE HAS SUDDENLY BECOME QUITE VOCAL THAT THIS DOCUSERIES SHOULDN'T AIR.
SLINKING OUT OF RETIREMENT ONLY WHEN IT'S HIS LEGACY IN DANGER OF BEING TARNISHED.
THAT'S NOT--THAT'S NOT EVEN REMOTELY TRUE, JAMES.
THE RED SKULL WAS A MONSTER! A LOT OF GOOD MEN AND WOMEN DIED TRYING TO STOP HIM!
THIS TRAVESTY OF "REPORTING" IS A SLAP IN THE FACE TO THOSE HEROES!
AH... "HEROES"...
IF YOU KEEP USING THE WORD, DO YOU THINK EVERYONE WILL EVENTUALLY BELIEVE IT?
AT WHAT POINT DO THESE PEOPLE STOP BEING CONSIDERED "HEROES," STEVE?
YOU AND OTHERS-- LIKE MY FATHER--PAINTED THE WORLD AS BLACK AND WHITE, HEROES AND VILLAINS...
...BUT THEN YOU BROUGHT US H-DAY.
"HERO DAY." A NATIONAL TRAGEDY.

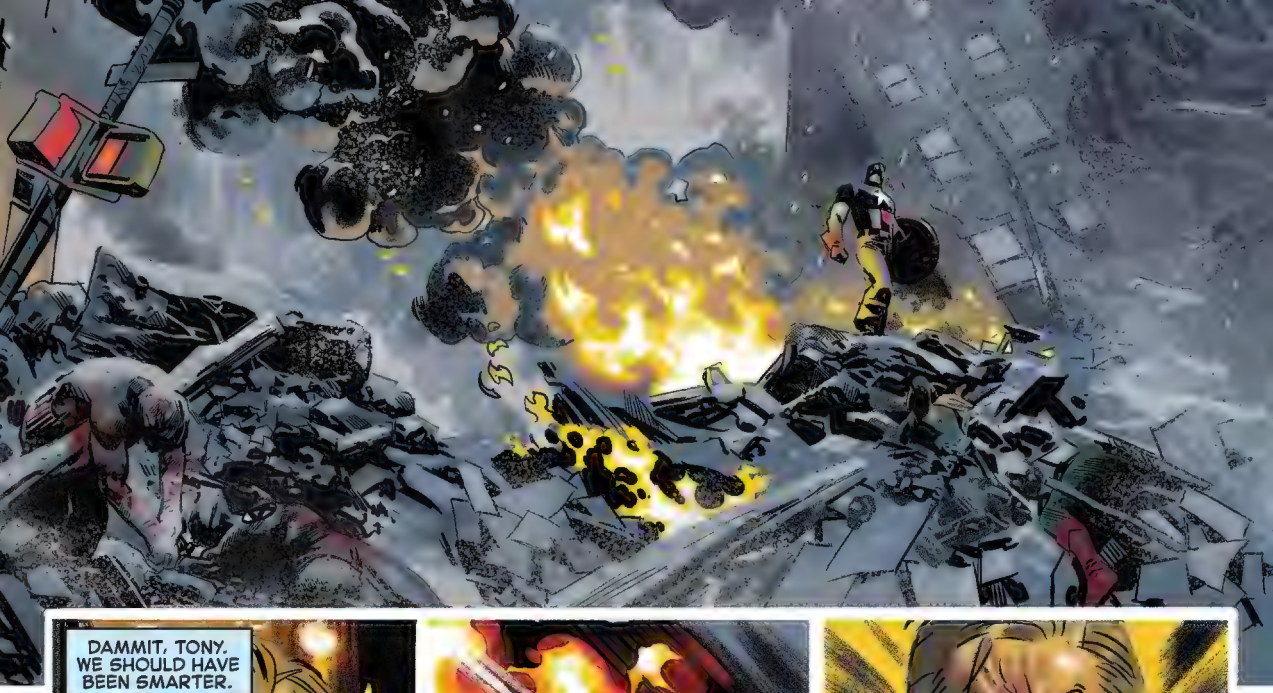
WHAT...? I'M NOT HERE TO...
A DAY OF RECKONING FOR THE SUPER HERO COMMUNITY. HUNDREDS DEAD, BOSTON LEVELED.
THE DAY THE WORLD WOKE UP...

...AND REALIZED THERE IS NO LINE BETWEEN VIGILANTE "HEROES" AND MEDIA-DUBBED "VILLAINS."
UNPARALLELED DESTRUCTION BY ALL, BUT THE DEATH COUNT FELL MOSTLY TO DR. BRUCE BANNER...
...THE HULK. HE WAS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE AVENGERS, WAS HE NOT, STEVE?

I'VE...I'VE SAID IT BEFORE... IT WAS ULTRON. HE...HE ENHANCED THE VILLAINS...TOOK CONTROL OF BANNER...
AH YES... "ULTRON"...

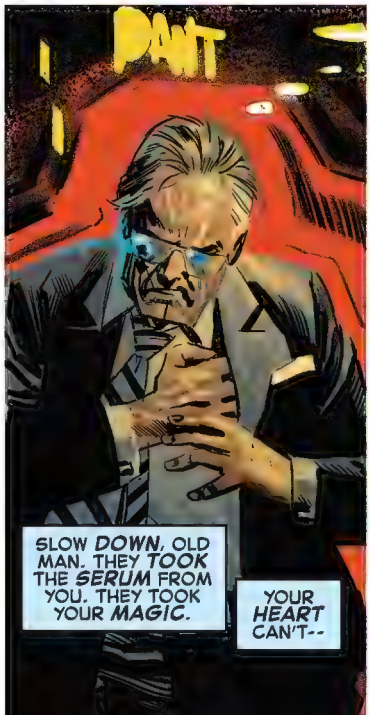
...THE EVIL A.I. CREATED BY YET ANOTHER AVENGER, DR. HANK PYM.
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE YOU ABOUT THE RED SKULL...

...WHEN YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT A HERO LOOKS LIKE?
DAMMIT, JIMMY!
I KNOW WHAT A HERO LOOKS LIKE!
THEY LOOK LIKE YOUR MOM AND DAD!
ARE YOU TRYING TO TARNISH THEIR LEGACIES...
...SO YOU DON'T LOOK AS HOLLOW BY COMPARISON?
MR. ROGERS-- PLEASE, WE CAN--
I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU TEAR AT OLD WOUNDS FOR RATINGS...
DAMMIT, I SHOULDN'T HAVE--
--SHOULDN'T HAVE LET HIM GET TO ME LIKE THAT.
HE'S GOT SO MUCH OF TONY AND JAN IN HIM-- THEY BOTH LOVED TO PICK FIGHTS WITH ME AND MY "OLD-FASHIONED WAYS."
HE'S STILL A KID. PROTECTED BY JARVIS' YOUNGER BROTHER UP IN THAT DAMNED CASTLE IN THE SKY.
WHEN I WAS HIS AGE, I WAS IN ENEMY TRENCHES, WATCHING MY FRIENDS--



DAMMIT, TONY. WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN SMARTER.

CALM DOWN, STEVE.
DON'T--


PANT
SLOW DOWN, OLD MAN. THEY TOOK THE SERUM FROM YOU. THEY TOOK YOUR MAGIC.
YOUR HEART CAN'T--

"WE'RE EN ROUTE, TONY..."

...ANY UPDATES?
NOTHING YET, NATASHA...
...JUST THAT IT LOOKS LIKE ALL SECRET IDENTITIES HAVE BEEN BLOWN WIDE OPEN.
GROUPS OF SUPER VILLAINS, ALL ENHANCED.
EVERYONE'S BEING LURED TO THEIR LOVED ONES AND AMBUSHED.
WHO'S DOING THE ENHANCEMENTS?
I DON'T KNOW YET, CAP. WOULD NEED TO ACTUALLY CAPTURE ONE OF THESE GUYS TO STUDY.
ALL RIGHT. WE'RE HERE, TONY. WILL GIVE A SITREP SHORTLY.
STAY SAFE.
HOLY... DID A BOMB GO OFF?
KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED.
Nhh...

...H-HEY, CAP...
...YOU SH-SHOULD SEE THE OTHER GUYS...
...'C-CAUSE I SURE... DIDN'T...
SON! SAVE YOUR BREATH!
HELP IS ON THE WAY!
C-CAP...
...I...I S-SAVED MY AUNT... HER NAME'S... M-MAY PARKER...
P-PROMISE ME...
...Y-YOU'LL K-KEEP HER SAFE...AND MY IDENTITY S-SAFE... EVEN AFTER I...I...
YOU'LL BE FINE, SON. YOU'LL BE--
M-MY NAME'S P-PE...
PE--
YOU'RE SPIDER-MAN, SON...

"...YOU'RE THE BEST OF US."
HEY.
PAL.
IT'S ALMOST CURFEW TIME. GET INDOORS UNLESS YOU WANT INDOORS TO BE A CELL.
DAMMIT. WHAT TIME IS IT?
OF COURSE...
...WILL DO, OFFICER...
SUBWAYS AREN'T EVEN RUNNING NOW.
NOT SURE HOW I'LL GET--
ONE MORE, MAN!

GOT IT! NOW LET'S GET--
..HOME.
WHAT DO WE HAVE *HERE?*
ILLEGAL RECORDING? OUT PAST *CURFEW?*
HEY!
CRAK!
CURFEW ISN'T FOR ANOTHER *TEN MINUTES.*
NOT ACCORDING TO *MY* WATCH.
THINK OF YOUR *HEART.*
THINK OF *ROSA.*

FASCIST #$%&!
BIG WORDS FOR A PUNK...
YOU CAN'T HELP HERE.
YOU'RE AN OLD MAN...
OFFICERS, I THINK THEY'VE LEARNED THEIR LESSON.

...AN OLD IDEA.
SIR, YOU'D BEST MOVE ALONG. IT'S CURFEW.
NO, SON...
...YOU'D BEST BE MOVING ALONG.

HA! GUYS, YOU GETTIN' THIS?
ALL RIGHT, OLD MAN, PLENTY OF ROOM FOR YOU TOO--
--AT THE--
HNH!
AHH!
YOU'RE SLOWER, WEAKER...
...BUT YOU'VE FOUGHT IN WARS.

YOU'VE FOUGHT THESE TYPES BEFORE. WHEN THEY'RE NOT BEATING OLD MEN AND CHILDREN...
THUD
...THEY CRUMPLE LIKE NEWSPAPER.
THUD
RUN, DAMMIT-- NH!
NH! BAD KNEE CAN'T--
JUST NEED TO STAY ALERT AND--
HRNH!
THUD THUD
NO, I CAN'T--
I CAN'T...
THUD THUD
THUD
DAMN, OLD MAN'S GOT SPUNK...
SHOULD WE TAKE HIM IN OR JUST DEAL WITH--

BAM!
--HIM--?
WHO THE--? NH!
CALL FOR BACKUP! CALL FOR--
AHHH!
COME IN! CENTRAL, COME--
IT'S OKAY, OLD MAN...
...YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE...
...YET.

"IT'S ALWAYS NICE TO SEE YOU, JAMES..."
...BUT I WISH YOU WOULD HAVE GIVEN US SOME NOTICE. THE RAFT HAS SECURITY PROTOCOLS, AND--
I WORK WHEN THE MUSE STRIKES, MAXWELL.
IN THIS CASE, MY MUSE IS THE PRESIDENT BREATHING DOWN MY NECK.
I RESPECT THAT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN MAKE CONTACT, BUT OUR SCANS ARE TELLING US THAT TOO MUCH USAGE COULD LEAD TO IRREPARABLE DAMAGE.
MM-HMM, AND?
WELL... THERE'S ALSO THE DANGER OF THE PUBLIC FINDING OUT...
"FINDING OUT"?
IS THAT A THREAT, MAXWELL?
N-NO, OF COURSE NOT! I--
BECAUSE I'VE GIVEN YOU PLENTY OF ADVANCEMENTS FOR YOUR PSYCHO-REHABILITATION PROGRAMS.

SO GET THE $%# OUT OF HERE.
THIS ISN'T FOR YOU.
FWOOSH
WOSH
WOSH
THIS IS FAMILY BUSINESS.
HEY, DAD.

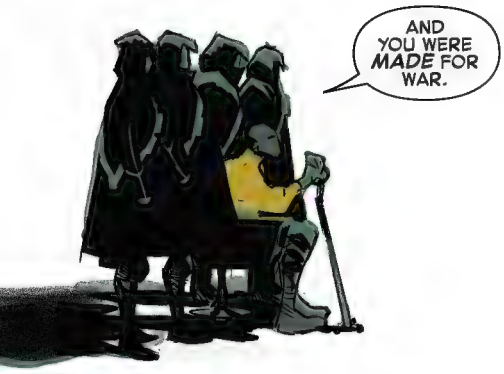
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO BLACK BAG HIM.
LOOK, IT'S PROTOCOL. HE'LL GET OVER IT.

YEAH, WELL...

...WE'LL SEE, WON'T WE?
HEY, CAP.

WELCOME BACK.
LUKE... WHAT--WHAT IS THIS? WHO ARE--?

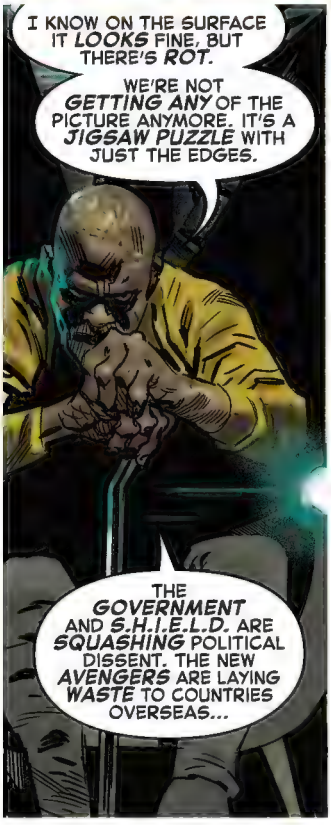
YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?
HE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE HE'LL BE ON BOARD...
HE WILL BE.
'CAUSE HE KNOWS WE'RE AT WAR. AIN'T THAT RIGHT, CAP?


AND YOU WERE MADE FOR WAR.

DAMMIT, LUKE...WHAT IS ALL OF THIS?

MATT'S DEAD, STEVE.

WHAT? WHEN--?
WE JUST SAW HIM...
STEVE... IT'S BAD OUT THERE.


I KNOW ON THE SURFACE IT LOOKS FINE, BUT THERE'S ROT.
WE'RE NOT GETTING ANY OF THE PICTURE ANYMORE. IT'S A JIGSAW PUZZLE WITH JUST THE EDGES.
THE GOVERNMENT AND S.H.I.E.L.D. ARE SQUASHING POLITICAL DISSENT. THE NEW AVENGERS ARE LAYING WASTE TO COUNTRIES OVERSEAS...

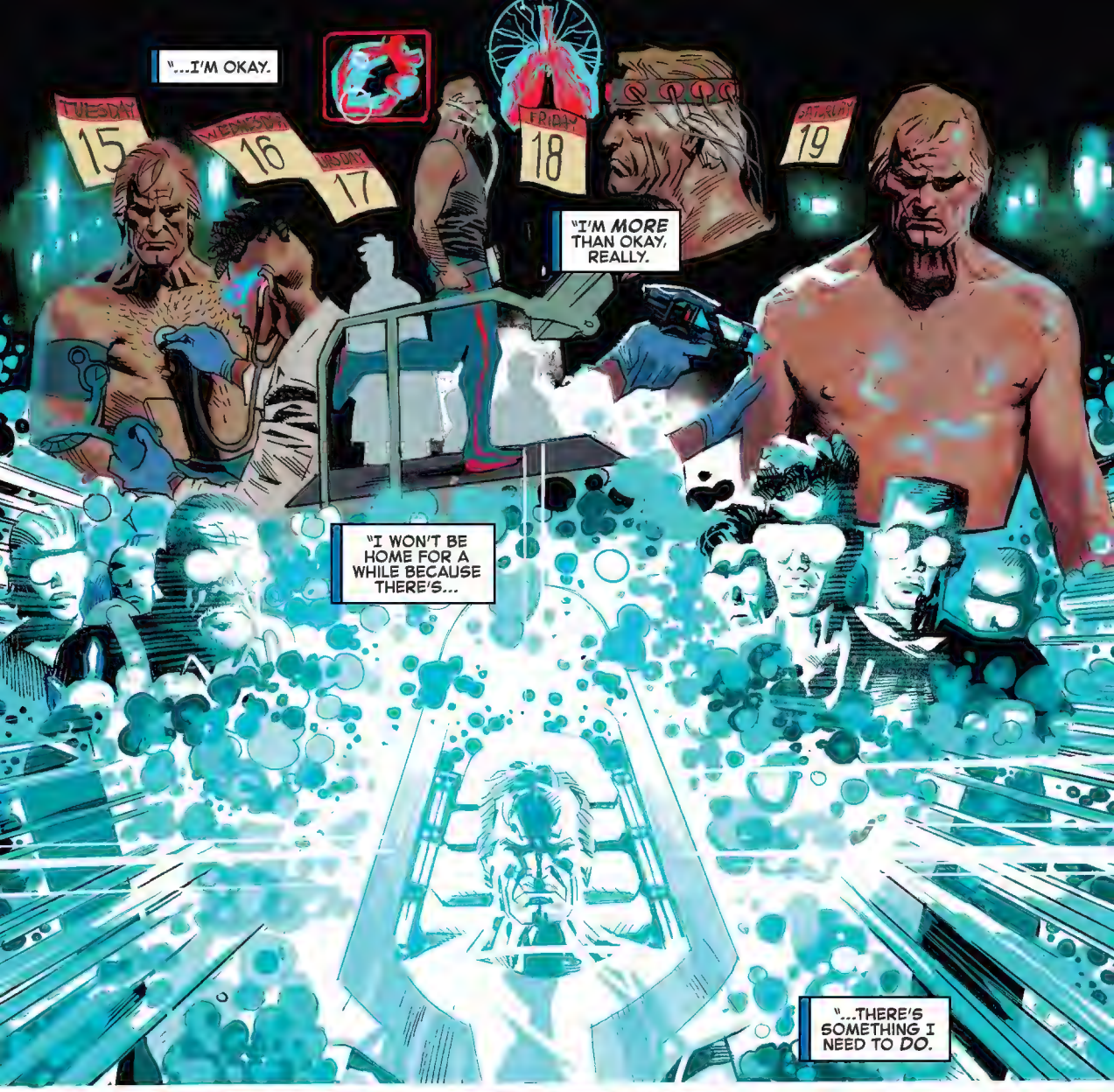
NO...THAT'S NOT... I WOULD KNOW...
HOW? THE NEWS? THE INTERNET? IT'S ALL UNDER CONTROL OF A CONGLOMERATE. A GROUP THAT JAN AND TONY'S KID IS A PART OF.

WE'RE TRYING TO GET THE WORD OUT. BEEN BROADCASTING TO FIND OTHERS, TO SPREAD THE TRUTH.
BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH. WE NEED SOMEONE FOR PEOPLE TO RALLY AROUND.
AND THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON FOR A JOB LIKE THAT.
I'M NOT... LUKE, I CAN'T EVEN PROTECT SKATEBOARDING KIDS...
YOU COULD...

...WITH THIS.
WHAT ARE YOU...?
...MY GOD...
IS THAT...?
MR. ROGERS, IT'S...AN HONOR. MY NAME'S CAREY, AND I'VE BEEN DOING MY BEST TO REPLICATE...
THE SUPER-SOLDIER SERUM...
YES, SIR.
WE WERE HOPING TO USE IT ON ONE OF...ONE OF US...BUT...
THEY DIED.
BECAUSE IT ONLY WORKS ON SOME.
LUKE... YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS...
I AM, STEVE.
I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO BE PART OF OUR GROUP OF DEFENDERS HERE, WORKING FROM THE SHADOWS.
YOU'RE CAPTAIN #$%& AMERICA.
YOU'RE AN AVENGER.
"DEFENDERS"...
...THIS IS YOUR GROUP?
NAH. I'M JUST THE OLD MAN DOLING OUT OLD WISDOM.

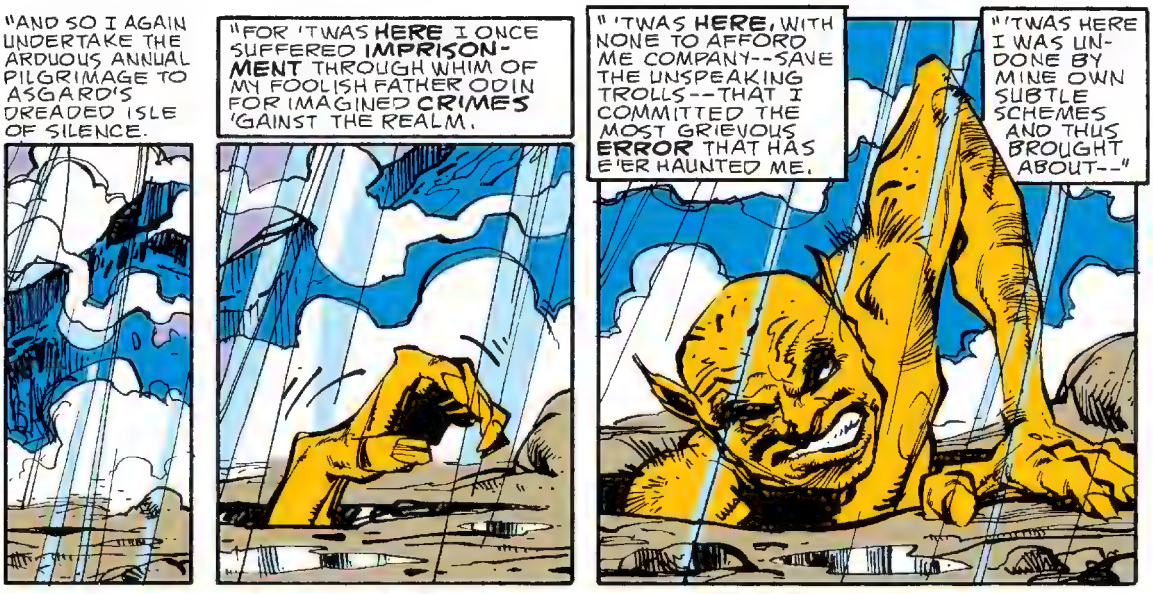
EVER SINCE MY BULLETPROOF SKIN DECIDED TO BECOME NEARLY IMMOVABLE, I'M ALL ABOUT THE KNOWLEDGE.
AMY HERE'S IN CHARGE. FORMERLY OF THE NEW S.H.I.E.L.D.-- SAME GOONS WHO JUST WHUPPED YOUR GERIATRIC ASS.
YOU'RE WELCOME, BY THE WAY.
MATT DIED DEFENDING PEOPLE WHO THE SYSTEM WAS TRYING TO DISAPPEAR.
WE'VE BEEN WORKING NONSTOP TRYING TO GAIN INTEL ON ALL OF THIS.
PEOPLE ON THE INSIDE HAVE MANAGED TO GET US PHOTOS--OLD SCHOOL--OF THE ABUSES...
THESE ARE AMERICANS.
THIS IS WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST.

"ROSA, IT'S ME.
"I'M SORRY THIS IS A MESSAGE AND NOT IN PERSON. I JUST NEED YOU TO KNOW...

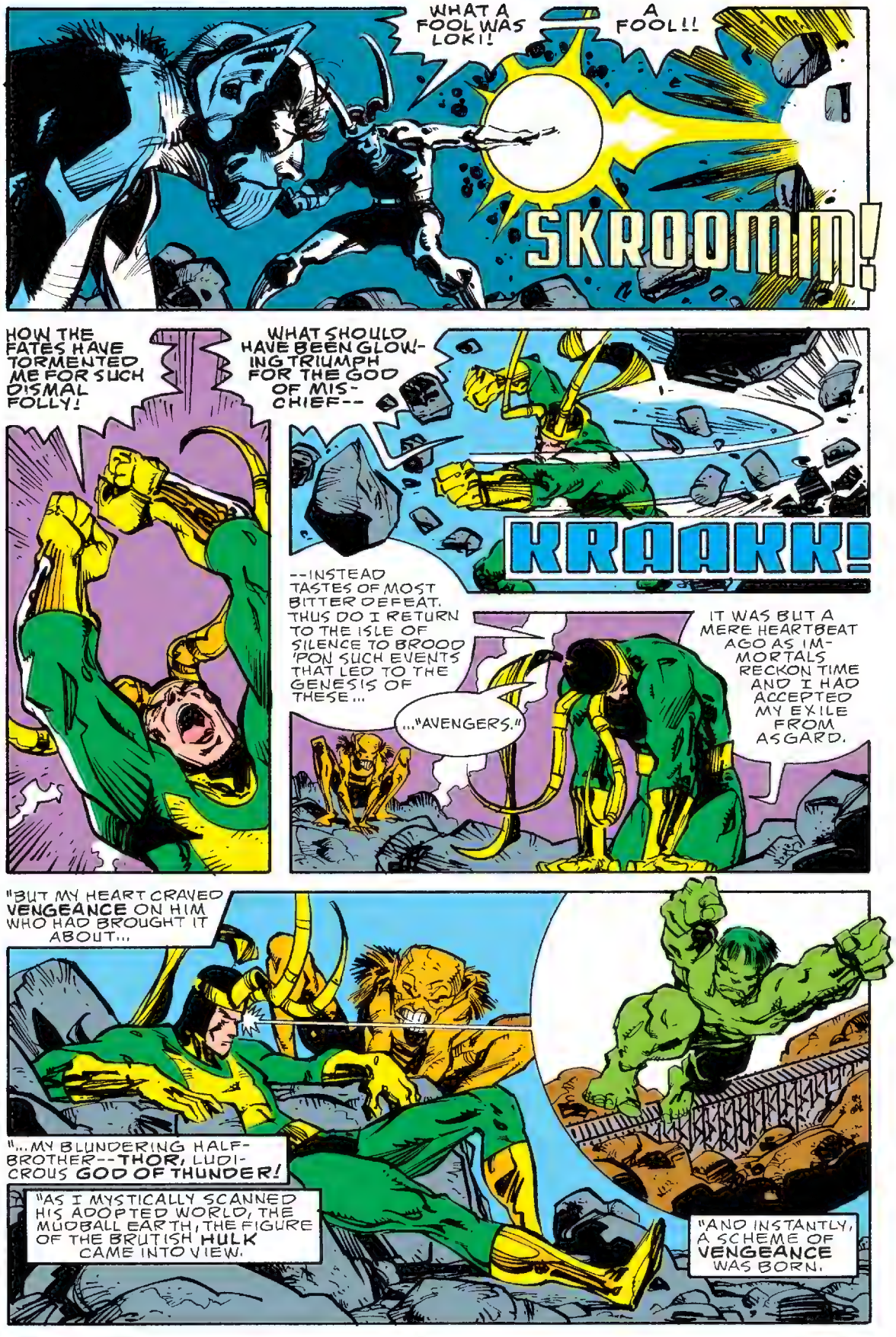

"...I'M OKAY.
TUESDAY 15
WEDNESDAY 16
THURSDAY 17
FRIDAY 18
SATURDAY 19
"I'M MORE THAN OKAY, REALLY.
"I WON'T BE HOME FOR A WHILE BECAUSE THERE'S...
"...THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO DO.

"I'M OPENING MY EYES.
"AND HOPEFULLY THE EYES OF OTHERS.
"BUT I CAN'T DO IT ALONE.
"ROSA...

"...I'M GOING TO ASSEMBLE THE AVENGERS."
To be continued!


"AND SO I AGAIN UNDERTAKE THE ARDUOUS ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO ASGARD'S DREADED ISLE OF SILENCE.
"FOR 'TWAS HERE I ONCE SUFFERED IMPRISONMENT THROUGH WHIM OF MY FOOLISH FATHER ODIN FOR IMAGINED CRIMES 'GAINST THE REALM.
"'TWAS HERE, WITH NONE TO AFFORD ME COMPANY--SAVE THE UNSPEAKING TROLLS--THAT I COMMITTED THE MOST GRIEVOUS ERROR THAT HAS E'ER HAUNTED ME.
"'TWAS HERE I WAS UNDONE BY MINE OWN SUBTLE SCHEMES AND THUS BROUGHT ABOUT--"

THE COMING OF THE ACCURSED AVENGERS!
RALPH MACCHIO AND WALT SIMONSON
STORY TELLERS
JOHN E. WORKMAN, JR.
LETTERS
GREGORY WRIGHT
COLORS
MARK GRUENWALD
EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO
EDITOR IN CHIEF


WHAT A FOOL WAS LOKI!
A FOOL!!
SKROOMM!
HOW THE FATES HAVE TORMENTED ME FOR SUCH DISMAL FOLLY!
WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN GLOWING TRIUMPH FOR THE GOD OF MISCHIEF--
KRAAKK!
--INSTEAD TASTES OF MOST BITTER DEFEAT. THUS DO I RETURN TO THE ISLE OF SILENCE TO BROOD 'PON SUCH EVENTS THAT LED TO THE GENESIS OF THESE...
..."AVENGERS."
IT WAS BUT A MERE HEARTBEAT AGO AS IMMORTALS RECKON TIME AND I HAD ACCEPTED MY EXILE FROM ASGARD.
"BUT MY HEART CRAVED **VENGEANCE** ON HIM WHO HAD BROUGHT IT ABOUT...
"...MY BLUNDERING HALF-BROTHER--**THOR**, LUDICROUS **GOD OF THUNDER!**
"AS I MYSTICALLY SCANNED HIS ADOPTED WORLD, THE MUDBALL EARTH, THE FIGURE OF THE BRUTISH **HULK** CAME INTO VIEW.
"AND INSTANTLY, A SCHEME OF **VENGEANCE** WAS BORN.

"I PROJECTED A **MENTAL IMAGE** 'PON NEARBY RAILROAD TRACKS.

"HE HEARD THE APPROACH OF AN ONCOMING TRAIN AND ATTEMPTED TO SNUFF THE DYNAMITE BEFORE IT COULD EXPLODE.

"HIS PLUNGE DAMAGED THE TRESTLE AND THE MULTI-WHEELED CONVEYANCE HEADED FOR ALMOST CERTAIN DOOM."

"THE DIM-WITTED HULK SPOTTED IT AS I KNEW HE WOULD.

KRAK!

LOOK! THAT HEAD JUTTING THROUGH THE TRACKS!

IT'S THE **HULK! HE** DID THIS!

HE'S TRYING TO KILL US ALL! I-I CAN'T STOP IN TIME!

"BUT AT THE LAST POSSIBLE INSTANT, THE BEHEMOTH BRACED HIS BACK--

"--SUPPORTING THE TRACKS AND ALLOWING THE TRAIN TO PASS OVER SAFELY... THOUGH THE VEHICLE'S ENGINEER NEVER KNEW IT.

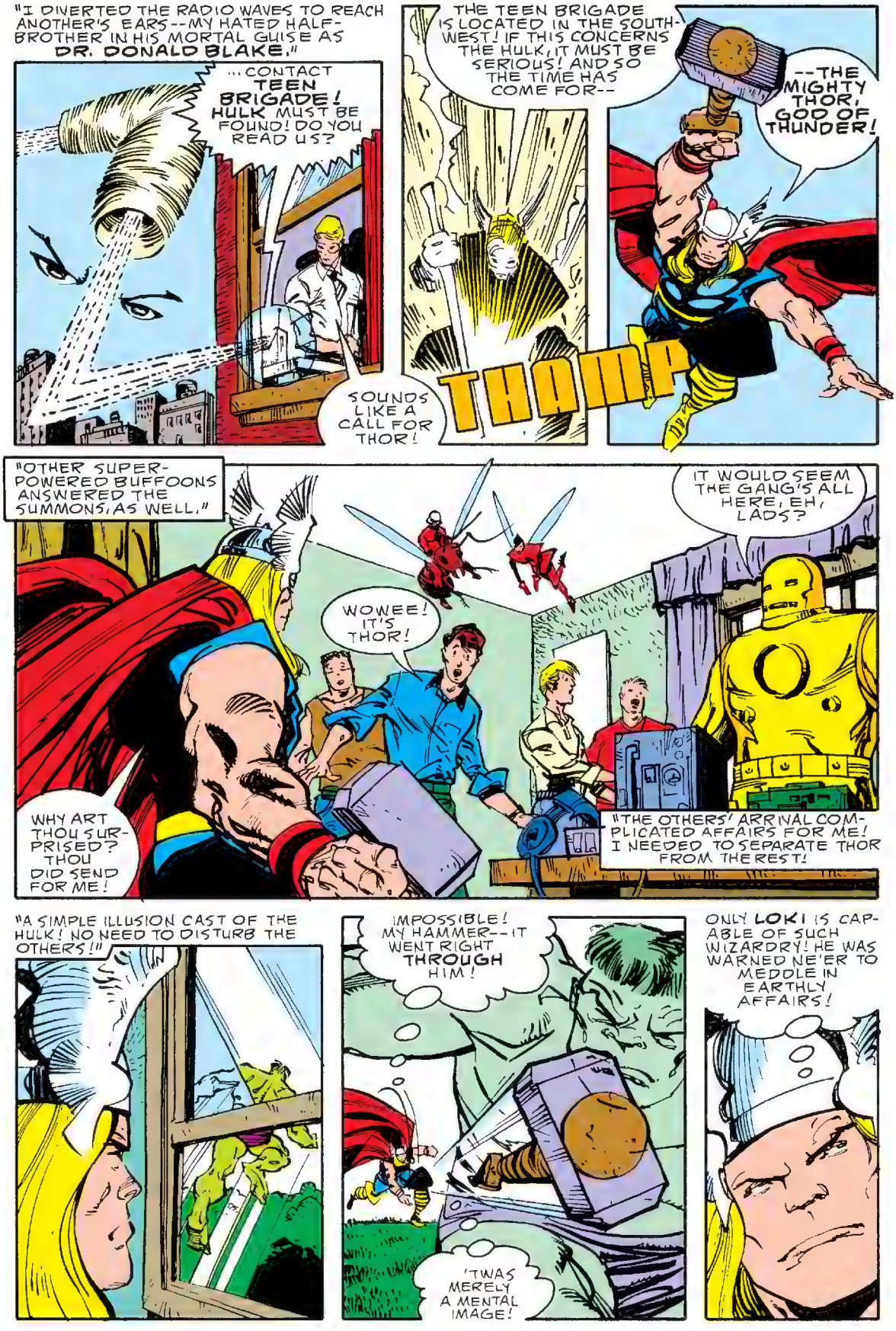
"THE HUMANS SOON SPREAD THE ALARM--AND **RICK JONES,** A MORTAL WHO HAD BEEN AT **DR. BRUCE BANNER'S** SIDE WHEN HE FIRST BECAME THE HULK, REACTED PREDICTABLY.

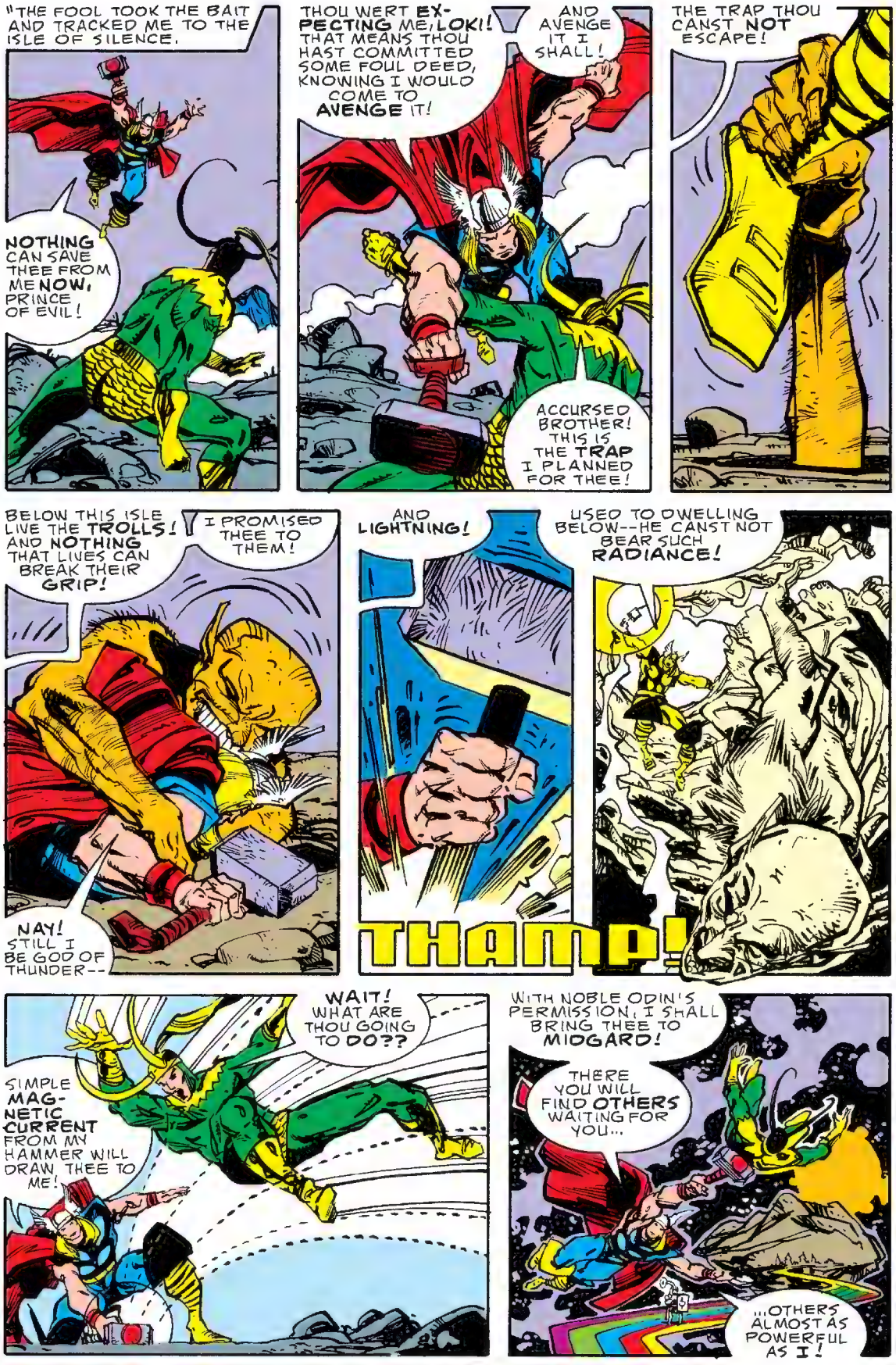
IT CAN'T BE!

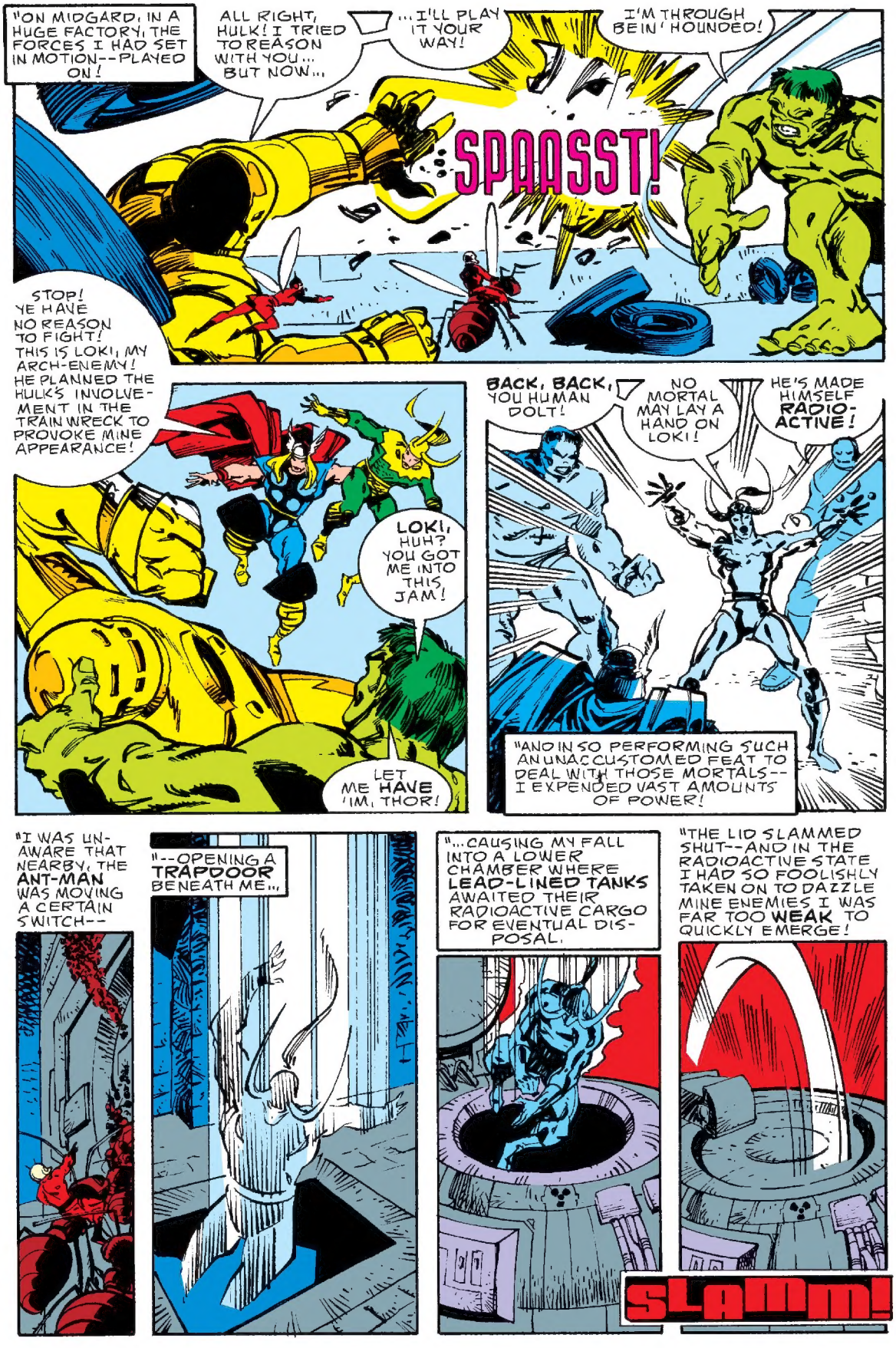
HULK!

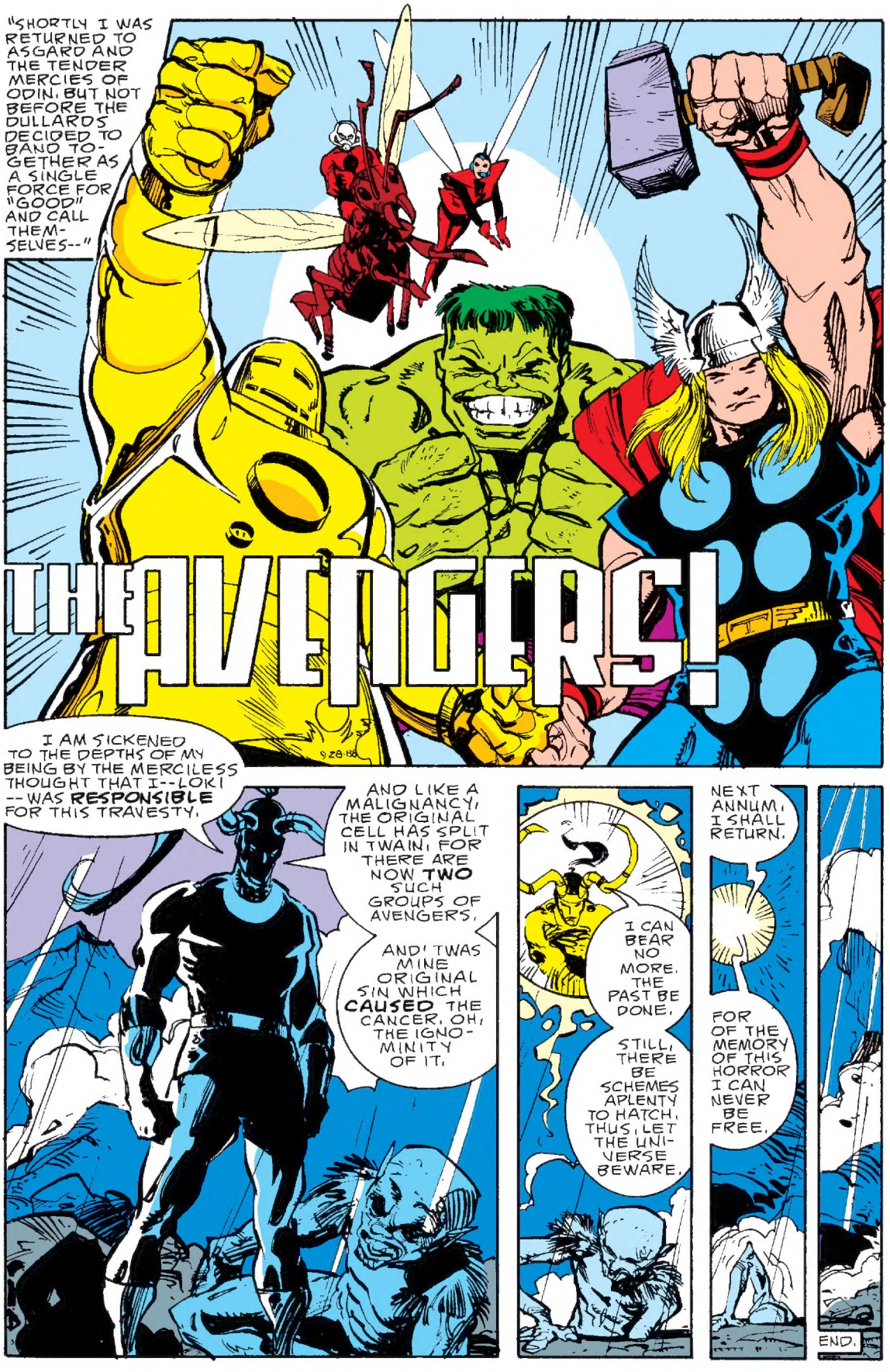
IF THE HULK IS INNOCENT, HE NEEDS HELP. IF HE'S GUILTY, IT'LL TAKE SOMEONE WITH EQUAL POWERS--LIKE THE **FANTASTIC FOUR** TO STOP HIM!

CALLING THE **FANTASTIC FOUR!** CONDITION **RED!** CONTACT THE **TEEN BRIGADE!** HULK MUST BE FOUND!! DO YOU READ ME?


"I DIVERTED THE RADIO WAVES TO REACH ANOTHER'S EARS--MY HATED HALF-BROTHER IN HIS MORTAL GUISE AS DR. DONALD BLAKE."
...CONTACT TEEN BRIGADE! HULK MUST BE FOUND! DO YOU READ US?
SOUNDS LIKE A CALL FOR THOR!
THE TEEN BRIGADE IS LOCATED IN THE SOUTHWEST! IF THIS CONCERNS THE HULK, IT MUST BE SERIOUS! AND SO THE TIME HAS COME FOR--
THOMP
--THE MIGHTY THOR, GOD OF THUNDER!
"OTHER SUPER-POWERED BUFFOONS ANSWERED THE SUMMONS, AS WELL."
WOWEE! IT'S THOR!
IT WOULD SEEM THE GANG'S ALL HERE, EH, LADS?
WHY ART THOU SURPRISED? THOU DID SEND FOR ME!
"THE OTHERS' ARRIVAL COMPLICATED AFFAIRS FOR ME! I NEEDED TO SEPARATE THOR FROM THE REST!
"A SIMPLE ILLUSION CAST OF THE HULK! NO NEED TO DISTURB THE OTHERS!"
IMPOSSIBLE! MY HAMMER--IT WENT RIGHT THROUGH HIM!
'TWAS MERELY A MENTAL IMAGE!
ONLY LOKI IS CAPABLE OF SUCH WIZARDRY! HE WAS WARNED NE'ER TO MEDDLE IN EARTHLY AFFAIRS!

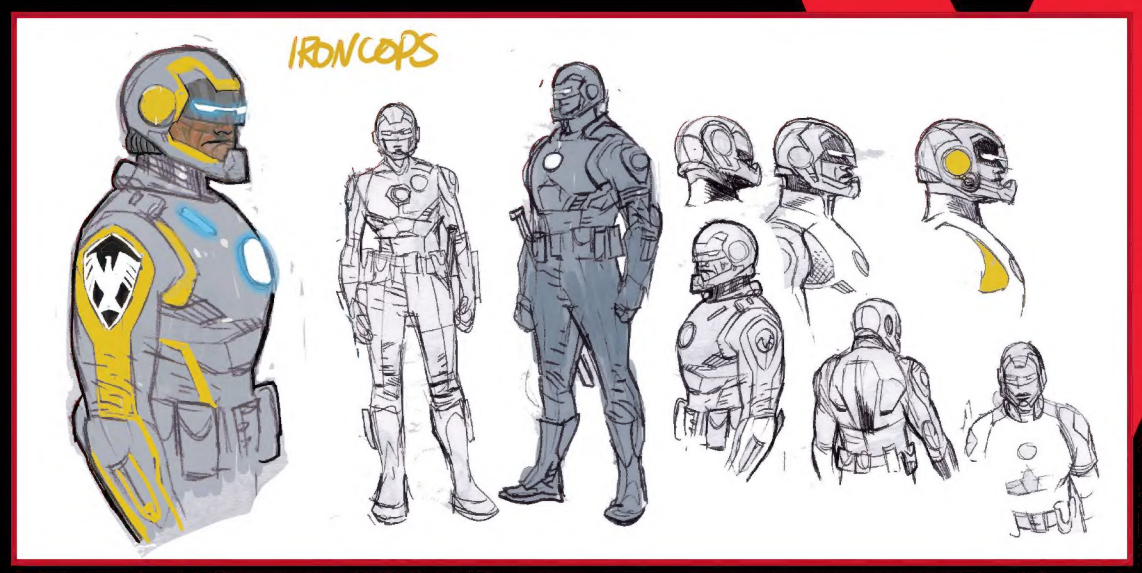

"THE FOOL TOOK THE BAIT AND TRACKED ME TO THE ISLE OF SILENCE.
NOTHING CAN SAVE THEE FROM ME NOW, PRINCE OF EVIL!
THOU WERT EXPECTING ME, LOKI! THAT MEANS THOU HAST COMMITTED SOME FOUL DEED, KNOWING I WOULD COME TO AVENGE IT!
AND AVENGE IT I SHALL!
ACCURSED BROTHER! THIS IS THE TRAP I PLANNED FOR THEE!
THE TRAP THOU CANST NOT ESCAPE!
BELOW THIS ISLE LIVE THE TROLLS! AND NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN BREAK THEIR GRIP!
I PROMISED THEE TO THEM!
NAY! STILL I BE GOD OF THUNDER--
AND LIGHTNING!
THAMP!
USED TO DWELLING BELOW--HE CANST NOT BEAR SUCH RADIANCE!
WAIT! WHAT ARE THOU GOING TO DO??
SIMPLE MAGNETIC CURRENT FROM MY HAMMER WILL DRAW THEE TO ME!
WITH NOBLE ODIN'S PERMISSION, I SHALL BRING THEE TO MIDGARD!
THERE YOU WILL FIND OTHERS WAITING FOR YOU...
...OTHERS ALMOST AS POWERFUL AS I!


"ON MIDGARD, IN A HUGE FACTORY, THE FORCES I HAD SET IN MOTION--PLAYED ON!
ALL RIGHT, HULK! I TRIED TO REASON WITH YOU... BUT NOW...
...I'LL PLAY IT YOUR WAY!
I'M THROUGH BEIN' HOUNDED!
SPAASST!
STOP! YE HAVE NO REASON TO FIGHT! THIS IS LOKI, MY ARCH-ENEMY! HE PLANNED THE HULK'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE TRAIN WRECK TO PROVOKE MINE APPEARANCE!
LOKI, HUH? YOU GOT ME INTO THIS JAM!
LET ME HAVE 'IM, THOR!
BACK, BACK, YOU HUMAN DOLT!
NO MORTAL MAY LAY A HAND ON LOKI!
HE'S MADE HIMSELF RADIO-ACTIVE!
"AND IN SO PERFORMING SUCH AN UNACCUSTOMED FEAT TO DEAL WITH THOSE MORTALS--I EXPENDED VAST AMOUNTS OF POWER!
"I WAS UN-AWARE THAT NEARBY, THE ANT-MAN WAS MOVING A CERTAIN SWITCH--
"--OPENING A TRAPDOOR BENEATH ME...
"...CAUSING MY FALL INTO A LOWER CHAMBER WHERE LEAD-LINED TANKS AWAITED THEIR RADIOACTIVE CARGO FOR EVENTUAL DISPOSAL.
"THE LID SLAMMED SHUT--AND IN THE RADIOACTIVE STATE I HAD SO FOOLISHLY TAKEN ON TO DAZZLE MINE ENEMIES I WAS FAR TOO WEAK TO QUICKLY EMERGE!
SLAMM!


"SHORTLY I WAS RETURNED TO ASGARD AND THE TENDER MERCIES OF ODIN. BUT NOT BEFORE THE DULLARDS DECIDED TO BAND TOGETHER AS A SINGLE FORCE FOR "GOOD" AND CALL THEMSELVES--"
THE AVENGERS!
9.28.88
I AM SICKENED TO THE DEPTHS OF MY BEING BY THE MERCILESS THOUGHT THAT I--LOKI--WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS TRAVESTY.
AND LIKE A MALIGNANCY, THE ORIGINAL CELL HAS SPLIT IN TWAIN, FOR THERE ARE NOW TWO SUCH GROUPS OF AVENGERS.
AND 'TWAS MINE ORIGINAL SIN WHICH CAUSED THE CANCER. OH, THE IGNOMINITY OF IT.
I CAN BEAR NO MORE. THE PAST BE DONE.
STILL, THERE BE SCHEMES APLENTY TO HATCH. THUS, LET THE UNIVERSE BEWARE.
NEXT ANNUM, I SHALL RETURN.
FOR OF THE MEMORY OF THIS HORROR I CAN NEVER BE FREE.
END.

Below are just some of the many new character and costume designs artist Daniel Acuña created for the world of AVENGERS TWILIGHT!

AVENGERS:TWILIGHT



ALEX ROSS

NEXT ISSUE

BOOK 2: THAT'S NOT WHO WE ARE

DANIEL ACUÑA